

Special Symposium

Environmental Impacts of Coastal Ocean Aquaculture

**137th Annual Meeting of the
American Fisheries Society
San Francisco, CA
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Organized by James A. Morris, Jr. and John Jeffrey Govoni

NOAA National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science

This symposium will provide a comprehensive assessment and analysis of environmental impacts of coastal ocean aquaculture. This symposium will include invited and contributed papers encompassing environmental impacts of both shellfish and finfish culture and forecasts of future aquaculture activities affecting global coastal ocean ecosystems.

Aquaculture activities located within the coastal ocean zone can have profound impacts on local and global economies, overfishing, and coastal ocean ecology. Facilitated by environmental pressures to decrease overfishing, technological advances, and the consistent increase in global consumption of seafood, the pressure on coastal managers to allow intensive aquaculture in the coastal zone is steadily increasing. Recently (June 2005) in the U.S., the National Offshore Aquaculture Act of 2005 (S. 1195) was introduced to establish the framework for permitting offshore aquaculture development and encourage private investment in the largest Exclusive Economic Zone of the world.

Many studies have documented the impacts of aquaculture in the coastal ocean. While most impacts are negative, not all are considered to be deleterious. Impacts are realized, however, from the estuary through the coastal ocean and from the benthic and epibenthic to the pelagic water column. Previous studies have assessed the damaging effluent of fish farms, changes in benthic ecology, genetic alteration and competition of native stocks by escapees, and parasite and disease transmission. The objective of this symposium will be to discuss current knowledge regarding these topics and to provide a forward looking synopsis of local and global ecosystem impacts of coastal ocean aquaculture. It is expected that this symposium will provide first hand scientific knowledge as we approach what is perceived by many to be the tipping point of aquaculture development in the coastal zone.

Symposium Goal

The goal of the symposium is to bring together scientists and resource managers to address knowledge of environmental impacts of coastal ocean aquaculture. We seek contributions from scientists and managers working on environmental impacts of marine aquaculture to share insights that may enhance the opportunity for meaningful changes in management policies. We encourage discussions of topics related to both positive and negative environmental and socio-economic impacts of increased aquaculture development in the coastal zone.